

Governor's Proposed FY23 Budget Adjustments  
Appropriations Hearing  
HB 5037 AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Department of Housing  
Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Kellyann Day, LMSW  
Chief Executive Officer  
New Reach, Inc.

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today on House Bill 5037 (AAC the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023). I am here to discuss the important investments through the Department of Housing to support efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut. My name Kellyann Day and I work in Greater New Haven and Fairfield County and am a resident of Cheshire, CT.

I have had the privilege to implement programs that make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring over the past 27 years at New Reach, a community based, nonprofit organization that prevents homelessness, operates crisis shelters and services and develops and owns affordable and supportive housing. Alongside many other partners in the state, we know that a funded system, which includes all three of these components (prevention, crisis and housing) is the only way that we are going to achieve our goals.

I respectfully request that the committee support the proposals listed in the Reaching Home Campaign's agenda and the CT Nonprofit Alliance agenda. I have attached a copy. I have also attached a copy of a two page state of homelessness for Greater New Haven.

Tonight, I would like to specifically talk about four items on that agenda, that I believe are essential to the state of Connecticut now.

The first is emergency need to invest funding into the front line of homeless and housing stability nonprofits.

For decades, New Reach and our partner nonprofits across the state, have been providing essential services to individuals and families who are unstably housed and / or homeless. We do this through a combination of community social work, best practices, partnerships, and sheer will and determination.

We employ compassionate and professional people to work with our neighbors who are, in many cases struggling with very serious issues. The funding we receive is to employ staff, so that they can carry out our mission of helping. 30 years ago, you (meaning the state of CT) supported this work 100%. Our state funding paid for the work. It covered the cost of salary, benefits, the rental of the space we use to meet with people, the cost of the heat we need to keep our staff and clients warm in the winter, the cost of supervision of the staff, to make sure our staff are valued and supported. Today, you not only expect the housing and homeless providers to continue to provide services, but now we also need to have computers, mandatory training, increased accountability, etc. To be clear, we need these new tools to continue to do this work, but you do not pay for it. You do not pay for increases in our costs.

You do not give us increases in our contracts to cover inflation, to cover the new expectations you have mandated on us. You do not pay for the technology we need to be compliant. You do not pay for the accountants and human resource professionals that we employ, who insure we are using our funding appropriately and that we are providing an inclusive, equitable and supportive work environment. We nonprofits have learned to raise private money, to fill in your gaps in funding. But those gaps have gotten too big. We need you to be accountable, fully fund the work that we do. And who do we employ? Most of our workforce are bipoc and female. As a result of this lack of fully funding the work that you have asked us to do, our workforce is struggling to survive. Without them, we don't exist, and the community does not benefit from the services.

Please support providing an additional \$13.34 million in FY 23 (\$8.08 million at DOH and \$5.26 million at DMHAS) to provide homeless and housing service organizations funding for adequate wages, benefits, and professional development for front line workers, increasing rent and utility costs, and better access to technology.

The second request I have tonight is to support the collaborative work and structure that the community nonprofits have created, the Coordinated Access Network. Without this network and the collective impact, the system will be fractured, inefficient, and ineffective. The state asked community nonprofit organization to come together and create this system, now it must be maintained. Please support an additional \$2.3 million in DOH's Housing/Homeless Services line to provide critical staff infrastructure support to [Coordinated Access Networks \(CANs\) and 2-1-1](#). CANs provide streamlined access to the homeless services system at the regional level. 2-1-1 serves as the statewide single point of entry to CANs.

The third priority is creating a way to stem the tide of families and individual into the crisis system. Please allocate \$2.5M for a proven eviction prevention program that targets families and individuals who are at the highest risk of entering the crisis shelter system should they be evicted. This program will partner with Legal Aid community and Right to Counsel to make sure that those who are at the highest risk, remain housed and do not enter the crisis system.

And finally, we need more housing. We have over 190 households in Greater New Haven who have vouchers to move out of shelter and they cannot find a place to live. Please support the support the governor's proposed allocation of \$50 million in American Rescue Plan recovery funds to support the creation of 350 additional housing units affordable to households with incomes between 30% and 50% of area median income.

Without the community nonprofits, there would be no programs to prevent homelessness, there would be no crisis safety net for those that find themselves without a home tonight and there would be no supportive housing for those most vulnerable.

Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to present this testimony, and for your hard work making important and life-saving decisions as we look to shape Connecticut's future beyond the pandemic— it is with your support that we can help make sure Connecticut's residents are healthy and stably housed.

Sincerely,  
Kellyann Day, LMSW  
CEO, New Reach, Inc.

